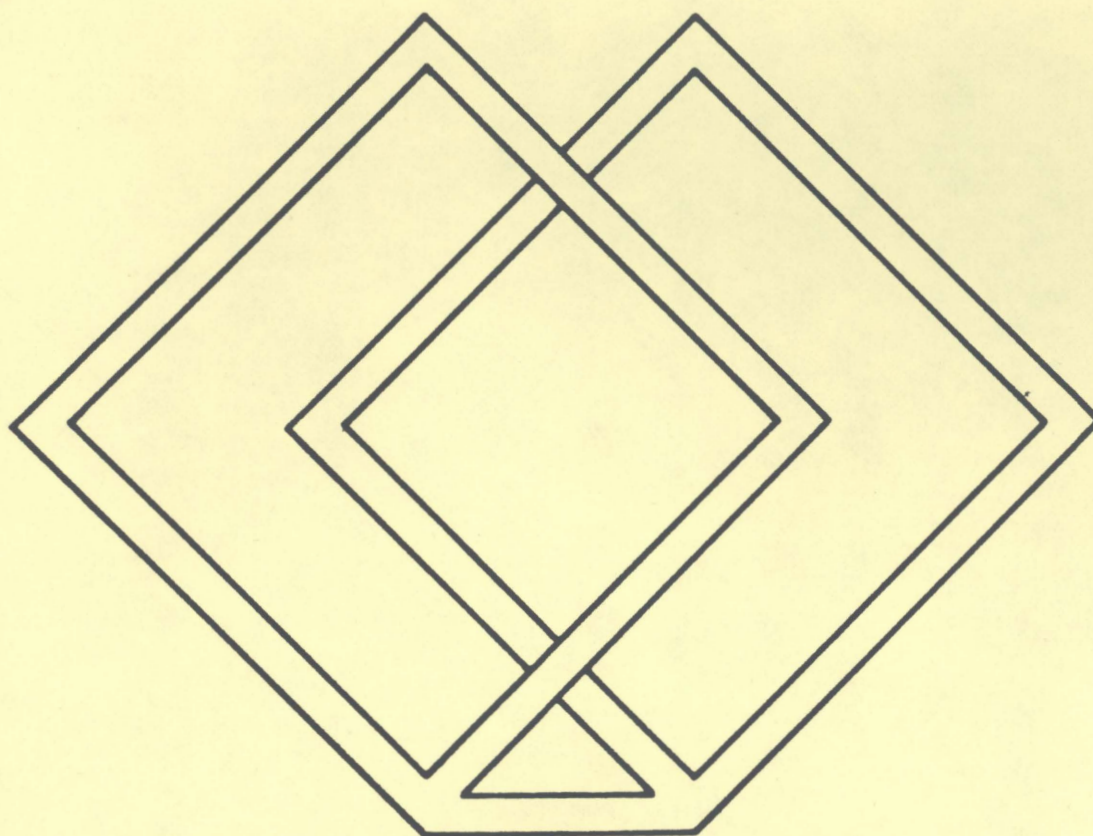


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I N D E X

<u>Item</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Pages</u>
Editorial	Frank Gillespie	1.
Australia's Vapour Trail Sightings Mystery	John Prytz	2-5.
The Trouble with UFO Groups -- !	Frank Gillespie	5-6.
Los Ovnis y la Ciencia	reviewed by John Prytz	7-9.
ACUFOS Bibliography Service	John Prytz	10-14.

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Editorial

YOU - AND YOUR JOURNAL

Every reader of this Journal should also be a contributor to the content of its pages, even if only to the extent of an occasional letter commenting on some aspect of what has already appeared here. With only limited contributions coming in, editorial discretion plays no part in the selection of material for each issue; and it becomes more of a search for something suitable to fill the pages. It would be a retrograde step if part of the Journal had to be devoted to reprints of secondhand material, much of which would already have been read by many of the recipients of the Journal. It would also be a pity if one or two contributors had to carry the full burden of supplying material for the Journal - and that is the way things seem to be heading at the moment.

Let's face it - non-readers aren't going to contribute much to the Journal; so all you readers, please get cracking, and do your bit to keep the Journal going. It is not going anywhere without you.

AUSTRALIA'S VAPOUR TRAIL SIGHTINGS MYSTERY

(by) John Prytz

Mother Nature, in her infinite wisdom, has perpetrated many a transient mystery upon mankind over the millennia. Fortunately for us, and our sanity, we have successfully fielded most of these; explained them to our satisfaction. But good as our batting average is, it's not by any means perfect. The UFO is worthy of mention in this context. So too are ball lightning and earthquake lights cases in point. Specific examples that spring to mind include the Tunguska "meteorite", America's "sonic boom" events from the late '70s, some of the recent Vela satellite "nuclear test" detections, and Australia's vapour trail event.

Australia's what?

The place: the skies off the West Australian Kimberley coast.

The time: late November 1982.

The event: sightings of a "mystery aircraft" and "mystery air trails".

During the wee hours of Monday, 29 November, near Derby in NW Western Australia, two civilian airline pilots independently reported sighting an unidentified aircraft with condensation trail. The aircraft did not show any navigation lights, yet was flying across an international airline flight corridor. Further, this mysterious craft was not properly separated from one of the civilian planes, a Qantas 747 on route to Australia from London via Singapore. Both the Qantas pilot, Captain Barry Roberts, and the pilot of Singapore Airlines Flt. 23A, queried its presence with air traffic control authorities in Perth.

Perth air traffic control indicated that there were no other civilian aircraft operating in the area at the time. Nor had Perth been notified to the existence of military aircraft operations for that area at that time, as is required. Defence authorities later advised the Australian Department of Aviation that none of their aircraft were in the Derby area at the time of the incident.

However, a major ANZUS-sponsored defence exercise, Sandgroper '82, was being held around the Derby area, at the time. Perhaps for that reason; certainly because Australian airspace had been violated without Australian knowledge or permission, the Australian Department of Defence took up the official investigation into the incident.

One early thought by the W.A. Director of Transport, Mr. Ellis Kiel, had the event (seen in the bright moonlight by the two jumbo pilots at around an altitude of 12,000 metres) due to U.S. Air Force KC135 refuellers or from military RAAF aircraft being controlled from Darwin, all part of the defence exercise.

Both the U.S. Embassy and the RAAF confirmed that their aircraft taking part in Sandgroper '82 had ceased operations several hours before the Qantas and Singapore Airline pilots reported the unidentified machine.

If the aircraft sighted by the civilian pilots was not in fact a military machine known to Australian authorities, and no civil aircraft (apart from the two jumbos) were authorised through the area, the obvious conclusions were that either it could have been an illegal smuggling operation of some sort or a possible penetration of Australian air space by a Soviet reconnaissance aircraft interested in the defence exercise and/or the controversial Australian-U.S. communications base at North-West Cape.

The mystery plane was operating in a well known radar blind spot and more than likely as not would have passed unnoticed had the commercial pilots not been in the area at the time. Thus, a spy or smuggling operation could not be immediately ruled out.

Although the Russians have a long history of openly spying on defence exercises and military ships/aircraft from the Western nations, including the not quite as above-board secretive missions into sovereign spaces/territorial waters (ie: submarine missions in various Scandinavian fiords comes to mind), up to the time of the Derby event there had never been any reports of Soviet intrusions into Australian air space, confirmed or otherwise. But if this had been a Russian aircraft, the best guess would be that it would have been a Tupolev Tu-126 electronic intelligence-gathering machine which would be operating out of bases in Vietnam.

That was one of the early guesstimates! And in fact, nowhere do I find any reports that the Russians deny this. However, the Defence Department introduced an element of doubt that any aircraft was seen - only its vapour trail. The implication was that the trail could of been made hours before the jumbos crossed its path, despite the pilots having stated that the trail was reasonably fresh. The Department of Defence would call in a senior specialist with the Bureau of Meteorology to study the upper atmospheric winds near Derby, W.A. on the morning in question to check out the possible lifetime of such a condensation trail, but as of the 1st of December all the Australian defence officials could state was that:

"The origin of the vapour trails is not firmly established and enquiries are continuing. When further information is to hand a further statement will be made."

Interestingly enough, as of June 1983, no further statement has ever been issued by the Department of Defence on the matter!

The nearest (in time) known aircraft flying across Derby on the route of the two jumbos was a U.S. Air Force C141 StarLifter en route to Alice Springs. This was some 45 minutes earlier. This route however was at right angles to the mysterious vapour trail. Nevertheless, it could have been eliminated from consideration based on the wind speeds in the area at the time. The Bureau of Meteorology report based on Department of Aviation wind observations, concluded that any condensation trail would have quickly dissipated. At the altitude of sighting, the winds were blowing at about 110 kilometres per hour. Wind speeds above and below this were slower, but still in excess of 60 kilometres an hour. Thus the sighting was made in real-time - on the spot. In fact, of the 7 flights through the area in the three hours either side of the sighting, including the C141 of 45 minutes prior, only two, the two original pilots, reported the mysterious trails, even following retrospective investigation.

So, back to either a smuggling operation, or spy flight - the aircraft caught in the act by the two 747 pilots. What with no radar coverage, hence confirmation, in the area, the Department of Defence had its work cut out for it. The betting however began to shift to an explanation centred around a privately owned jet which had failed to report in to air traffic control officials in either Darwin or Perth. It was now over a week after-the-fact.

Nearly three weeks after-the-fact the Defence Department still had not pinned down what had violated Australian air space, and near a major defence exercise in progress too! The betting was still on an unidentified civilian aircraft as the most likely cause. The West Australian newspaper for the 18th of December 1982 reported a Department of Defence spokesman as stating that:

"Investigations just finished had eliminated military aircraft from any country as the source."

The last word on the issue, to the best of my knowledge following several personal quiries with the press, was a report several

days later written in the Canberra Times, a newspaper which appears to have featured the story in greatest detail.

Although the exact reasons for the elimination of military aircraft from consideration, whether Russian or other, have never been spelled out in the press, other possibilities have been given more of an airing. The best that can be said is that any terrestrial explanation leaves a questionable taste in the mouth. That final press report sums things up.

"The Department of Defence still cannot explain the origin of the vapour trail seen over King Sound, near Derby, on November 29 by the captains of Qantas and Singapore Airlines Boeing 747 airliners flying from Singapore to Sydney.

The RAAF has denied that any of its aircraft were involved, as has the United States Embassy.

Neither aircraft captain reported being able to see the lights of an aircraft in the area.

Interviews with the airline pilots who reported the vapour trail have ascertained that neither saw an aircraft, though their initial reports said that the trail appeared fresh.

Winds...at the time...would have quite quickly dissipated a trail. Both pilots have many thousands of hours' air experience and are well able to identify new from decaying trails.

The recent Western Australian sightings, with all probable causes eliminated, including an off-course USAF B52, have to be narrowed down to the possibility that it could have been a civil aircraft which had not filed a flight plan. But even this would have involved a fairly sophisticated aircraft to have been flying at the reported altitude.

Another possibility is that it was an illegal operator bringing in heroin or some drug of similar value, though these usually tend to operate at lower altitudes.

In any case, the track of the machine, which indicated that it was flying just above the coastline, is not considered to have been 'normal' for such aircraft as are suspected of using abandoned World War II airstrips in northern Australia.

So far, all the official investigations have been able to positively identify are what the trail was not laid by. They have not been able to say what it was, a factor which is bound to increase Western Australian demands for better defence facilities."

(Canberra Times, 20 Dec. 1982)

So, Mother Nature, with a little help from her terrestrial (?) friends, does it to us again. If the true answer is known, it is known to only the powers-that-be. Whether or not any person on Earth knows (and if so they are keeping damn quiet) means little to those of us who don't know. If somebody does know, I'd like to know as well, being an Australian citizen concerned with her internal security.

If nobody knows, then clearly the event approaches something near and dear to the hearts of us all - the sighting, in the truest sense of the phrase, of a UFO (or at least the by-product of one).

To the best of my knowledge, ufologists have not entered into this case. Perhaps because it smacks too much of something mundane and terrestrial. Perhaps because any effort and energy would be a wasted effort; wasted energy. Still, one can't help but wonder.

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THE TROUBLE WITH UFO GROUPS -- !

by Frank Gillespie

Over the years, UFO groups and organisations everywhere seem to have been plagued with internal strife, divisions, factional fights, breakaways and so on; all of which tend to divert the energies of the organisation into unfruitful channels. These troubles have been made the subject of much publicity, especially by debunkers who believe that discrediting ufologists helps prove the non-existence of UFOs. It has sometimes been suggested that extra-terrestrials are promoting this strife, for the purpose of frustrating UFO investigation which could result in proof of their existence. After more than 30 years experience as an active worker in various types of organisation (church, professional, social, sporting and UFO), I am convinced that similar problems occur with similar frequency in all these organisations. The cause is obviously the very terrestrial one of human nature, with all its inbuilt imperfections.

Human nature is a tremendously variable thing; and every group, society or association is likely to have a wide spread of personality types amongst its members. There are those who play a passive role; some who display missionary zeal; and others, who dominate and command. Above all, there is a certain type of person who will survive no matter what; who will eventually hold the reins of power, whether actually in office or not; and who, almost inevitably, will damage their own organisation, possibly to the point of destruction. Looking back over my own experiences, I now realise that these persons achieve power, not because of their personality or strength of character, but because they discard all of the accepted standards of behaviour, and adopt instead a code which ruthlessly capitalises on the reluctance of the average person to rock the boat. One might say that the Commandments they follow in place of the conventional set, read something like this:

1. Be tough and insensitive. This enables you to withstand criticism without wilting or making mistakes under pressure.
2. Destroy the good name of anyone who makes a fetish of honesty, ethics and integrity. They represent a threat to your own ambitions, but they are always vulnerable to attacks on their reputation.
3. Seize any advantage you can find. For example, most organisations have gaps in their written records, which can be filled with things to your advantage which you 'remember'.
4. Don't allow anyone else to do work of any significance. The advantages of this are threefold. Firstly, it means the work of the organisation comes under your control, and you can do it if, when and how most suits yourself. Secondly, it prevents anyone else from knowing anything about running the show, so the organisation becomes totally dependent upon you. Thirdly, if you are ever caught in a naughty act, or otherwise faced with a seemingly impossible situation, you have the last resort of reciting your marvellous record of work and achievement, and claiming that this should prevent nice people from criticising you or taking action against you.
5. Never apologise. To most people, an apology is taken as a sign of weakness. Besides, it is an admission that you were wrong.
6. Never be fair or reasonable. If you give someone a fair go, there is just a chance they may prove that they are better than you.
7. Be rude and nasty. Niceness is generally equated with meekness; but very few people have the courage to tackle someone who is habitually nasty.
8. Stir up trouble for others. If you always have the pot on the boil, with someone else at the centre of attention, this will help cover up your own misdoings.
9. Ignore rules and regulations yourself, but enforce them rigidly for others. Provided you observe Commandments 1 to 8, nobody will ever dare to cite you for an infringement.
10. Be outwardly modest. Aver in public that you do not seek praise and recognition for what you do; but stomp on anyone who fails to give you all due credit. In other words, don't sing your own praises - but train the choir to do it for you.

I have no doubt that the members of just about every UFO (or other) organisation will be able to recognise the sort of character I have just described amongst their number - perhaps not on all ten points, but probably seven or eight. Does recognition help to deal with the problem? Unfortunately, not in my experience. I have seen as many as nine people determined to make a united stand against one disrupter - and I have seen those same nine people meekly back down in a confrontation, because they were too nice to be as nasty as they needed to be. It takes a 'nasty' to deal with a 'nasty'; which is probably why, when there are two or more of them in the same organisation, either they gang together, or all but one smartly leaves.

They say "Prevention is better than cure.". Is it then possible to screen incoming members to a group, so that this type of person never gets in? This is much harder than it sounds, for two reasons. Firstly, these people always have the ability to put on a front when it suits them - and, out of the 'group' environment, they may be genuinely nice people. Secondly, there is something about the organisation scene which can engender a personality change, usually in the last person you would expect. This process starts with no apparent cause, and, once started, proceeds very rapidly and unstoppably to completion. For some reason which escapes me, some people never really believe this personality change has taken place; and they remain intensely loyal to a person who exists only in their memories. Such are the vagaries of human nature.

Just because I have never learnt any effective way of dealing with this sort of problem, does not mean that no reliable solution exists. I would be very interested to hear from anyone who has ever observed a procedure which was effective without also being destructive. Of course every case is different, but if enough people contribute useful ideas, perhaps some common pattern will emerge. Dear readers - over to you!

(by) John Prytz

ACUFOS personnel will be delighted to know that scientific ufology is alive and well in Spain. Why? The well known and respected Spanish ufologist, Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos, has recently collaborated with his colleague, Miguel Guasp, to co-author Los OVNIS y la Ciencia (UFOs and Science) - 1981.

This book, the product of two years of joint research, is proposed to be the result of "a serious job trying to implement a scientific methodology to the UFO problem" (V.-J. B.O. - personal communication, 7 March 1983). This, if true, would obviously be of interest and appeal to ufologists who support the ACUFOS philosophy towards ufology. For that reason, and because Australian ufology and ufologists lack knowledge of Spanish ufology and ufologists (relative to say the U.K. or U.S.), I agreed to review this contribution to the UFO movement.

An equally well known and respected American ufologist, Dr. Richard F. Haines of NASA's Ames Research Center (author of Observing UFOs: An Investigative Handbook), has written the forward for authors Ballester Olmos and Guasp. Parts of that forward state that:

"What Ballester-Olmos and Guasp have done is to approach the subject of scientific UFOlogy systematically, carefully, critically. And they have managed to bring together, between the covers of a single book, many diverse but crucially important subjects related to the serious investigation of UFOs. ... the authors (have) personally investigated every UFO event reported here ... After first establishing the general nature of close encounters of the three kinds through (these) first-hand investigative studies, the authors explore the scientific context which underlies the very heart of any study of an unknown phenomenon. This approach is clearly in the tradition of science and has shown itself to be a powerful tool to help us understand more. ... They treat subjects that most others either have ignored or otherwise avoided. ... Ballester-Olmos and Guasp have succeeded in tilling a lot of ground here. And they have planted seed in some of it that will eventually bring to harvest a rich crop of insights about the UFO phenomenon."

Strong stuff from a UFO heavy-weight! Examination of the volume by myself has given rise to this reviewer nothing that would suggest that anything less than that is the case. This is not to say that the authors have solved the UFO mystery. They haven't. But then they haven't claimed to have done so. Their "message", according to a joint statement in their introduction is that:

"Ufology, in its current state, is an embryo to a significant, new discipline, as originally was the Alchemy, which only became Chemistry when magic and obscurantism were separated from pure Science."

This is no mere (and typical) 190 page mass-market "out to make a buck" paperback. This 382 page softbound research volume covers a wide range of ufological topics such as epistemology, methodology and organization, physics, statistical studies, the theory of processes, the cosmic connection (apologies to Carl Sagan), and a review of hypotheses. This is in addition to their personal accounts of their first-hand investigations into all kinds and manners of

Spanish close encounter cases.

Their text is supplemented by over four dozen illustrations, coupled with lots of tables and photographs. The 16 B&W photos reflect the local scene (sightings environment, UFOs, ufologists, etc.), not the tried and true (overdone) stock shots that we've all seen a dozen times over.

In addition to the 11 chapters and an epilog, the authors have tacked on several appendices. One of these is an 8 page bibliography (something near and dear to my heart) on topics the authors consider central as "aids to the UFO investigator" (ie: the study and handling of UFO witnesses; UFO manuals, etc.). This bibliography is in addition to "end of chapter" references. Also included as an appendix, a questionnaire for "solid light" cases.

Alas, no book, ufological or otherwise is perfect (perfection being a state of mind in the eye of the beholder of course and only relative). One major criticism is that there is no index, something that no work that approaches that of a no nonsense, academic tome should be without - the more detailed the better.

To have produced such a work as Ballester Olmos and Guasp have, they must have been (in large part) motivated by love of subject. Ballester Olmos told me "we don't feel ashamed for asking you ... to publicize about our book: we want our ideas to spread, because we believe they are good for the ufology of the future!". However, as far as Australia is concerned, that love of subject, and that spread, will be hindered as their book is in Spanish! This is neither the fault of the authors nor of what must be a large percentage of their ideally projected audience. It just is. However, to reach that wider (American, New Zealand, Canadian, Australian, British, South African, etc.) audience, incorporating the bulk of the ufological community, one would hope that somebody, sometime (soon), somewhere, will produce an English language translation - it would be well worth it. But as things now stand, the language barrier would have to be considered as a negative point in terms of considering purchase - unless you speak/read Spanish of course!

That said however, I'd also say that for those willing to take some time, trouble and care, useful information and insights could be had from examination of the original text, even if your Spanish is, in a phrase, ratshit (or worse). Most of the tables and illustrations are comprehensible; many of the bibliographic citations are in English.

In addition, for those so interested, an English abstract (of 5 pages) of UFOs and Science is available free of cost from the reviewer. Please direct your requests to P.O. Box 189, Curtin, A.C.T., 2605, Australia.

Getting back to content, while not (from my point of view) a criticism, it's clear from the Haines forward that the authors are predisposed towards things extraterrestrial.

"The particular area of the unknown that these authors have considered finds its fundamental basis in one of mankind's oldest and deepest concerns, namely, the possible presence of other intelligent life in the Universe. ... interest in the possibility of extraterrestrial life has been the result of many earlier writers, playwrights, film producers and visionaries who helped us expand our consciousness beyond the limits of our own imagination, beyond our planet's thin atmosphere, and beyond our solar system. This same interest has, no doubt, helped motivate the authors of the present book."

The authors, in their own abstract, highlight their belief in "the high probability of (the) existence of advanced life in the cosmos" and "that the ETH is the most positive model to explain UFO phenomenonology". Despite these parting conclusions, it would be incorrect to say that the book is just another volume about extraterrestrial spaceships and alien visitors. The overall emphasis of the text is on the UFO and the author's UFO experiences, warts and all.

In conclusion, there would be in existence many a UFO book that I would advise one to well have second thoughts on obtaining relative to the work currently under consideration; UFO books which have, or will, undoubtedly find themselves homes on the shelves of ACUFOS ufologists in preference to Los OVNIS y la Ciencia. The only justification for giving a "no-go" with respect to obtaining this volume (apart from acute poverty or an acute lack of time or storage space) would be, in my opinion, the parent language of the text. If you are among the fortunate few that speak/read Spanish, even if it should be rusty, and you take your ufology seriously, then this is something you must seriously consider owning. I shall be pleased to have it in my own personal collection.

But for the bulk of us, however, I'd wager dimes to doughnuts that never have so many, shelled out so much, for so little in the past - even if in English! You could do worse than take the time and effort to come to grips with what Ballester Olmos and Guasp have to say about UFOs and ufology.

To order, send a request note plus \$US 9.00 (or equivalent currency) to:

Plaza & Janes, S.A.
Export Department
Virgen de Guadalupe, 21-33
Esplugas de Llobregat
Barcelona, SPAIN

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NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

If you are able to type your manuscript, please do so on A4 size paper, with 20 mm margins all round, so that your typescript can be photocopied directly into the Journal pages. Handwritten manuscripts are welcome - but please, make them as legible as you can.

The word 'UFO' (plural 'UFOs') appears to have become an accepted part of our dynamic English language, along with its derivatives 'ufonaut', 'ufologist' etc.. The exact form varies (e.g. 'ufo' instead of 'UFO'); but 'U.F.O.' does seem to be well on the way out. In the interests of promoting uniformity, contributors are requested to use 'UFO' (the capitals make it stand out) and 'ufology' in their typescripts; except, of course, where they are quoting from other sources.

ACUFOS BIBLIOGRAPHY SERVICE: LIFE IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM: THE MOON
(WITH TRANSIENT LUNAR PHENOMENA) (by) John Prytz

Compiler's Note: The Moon has played a large role within ufology over the years. Though sometimes itself mistaken for a UFO, the Moon has featured in speculations that it is a base of operations for UFO intelligence(s) because of reports of surface feature changes of various kinds on what is supposed to be a dead world; that it is itself an artificially constructed interstellar space ark. Nor has the Moon escaped scientific speculation that it could harbour some form of indigenous life forms, more than likely of a micro nature. Contrary to expectations, the Moon is in some respects even more of an enigma following the near environment and on-site manned and unmanned exploration of the '60s and '70s. No scientist can state with confidence how, when or why Terra acquired Luna. This data base references just a few of the thousands of works to life on the Moon and associated Transient Lunar Phenomena (TLP) which go back many centuries.

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